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NEW ORLEANS.



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1891.



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NEW ORLEANS.

New Orleans, the chief city of Louisiana, and one of the most important commercial cities in the United States, is situated on both sides of the Mississippi River—the greater portion on the east bank—107 miles from its mouth. Its corporate area is 187 sq. m., but a large portion of this is market-gardens, forest, and swamp, and only 48 sq. m. are built over, fronting on the Mississippi, and running back from half a mile to 3 miles. The city proper has a river frontage of 13 miles, and its western district, 'Algiers,' of 3 miles. The Mississippi makes two bends here, giving the old city a crescent-shaped front, whence its former title, 'The Crescent City,' but it is now the shape of the letter S. The river is from 600 to 1000 yards wide, and 60 to 240 feet deep. The bar at its mouth was removed in 1874-79 by the Eads jetties in South Pass, and vessels of 30 feet now easily reach New Orleans. The commerce of the city is large (\$550,493,315 in 1890), and it is second in the United States in exports. New Orleans is the terminus of three canals, and of six large railroads (total mileage, 17,842) and three local lines, while twenty lines of steamships connect

it with other American and foreign ports. Since 1875 it has made great progress in manufactures, particularly in cotton goods, cotton-seed oil, machinery, lumber, furniture, fertilisers, sugar-refining, rice-milling, beer, cigars, &c. Its factories increased from 554 in 1870 to 898 in 1880, and 2100 in 1890; and their product from \$8,450,439 to \$44,500,000.

The land upon which New Orleans is built is perfectly flat, and lies from 3 to 6 feet below the level of the Mississippi at high-water, and is protected from overflow by levees or dykes of earth. Similar levees in the rear keep out the waters of Lake Pontchartrain. The soil is saturated with water, and cellars are impossible. The climate is warm and damp, the mean temperature for the year being 69° F. The summer is tempered by winds from the Gulf, and is not oppressively warm. On account of its situation, the city is badly drained. It is without sewers; open gutters carry the rain-water into canals, and thence into Lake Pontchartrain, but they are insufficient, and the streets are frequently flooded after a heavy rainfall. The health of the city, however, has greatly improved within recent years; the death-rate has been reduced from 59 per 1000 in 1860 to 24·80 in 1890.

While it possesses few imposing buildings, New Orleans is a picturesque city. There are several parks little improved, but with handsome monuments or statues of Jackson, Lee, Franklin, and others. The custom-house of granite cost \$4,500,000, and is the largest and most imposing building in the city. The cathedral of St. Louis, a Gothic church erected in 1794, is a good sample of the Creole-Spanish archi-

ecture. The archiepiscopal palace (1737) is the oldest building in the city. Other noteworthy structures are the cotton exchange, United States mint, St Charles Hotel, and Christ and St Patrick's churches. There are 188 churches, and 78 public schools, with 430 teachers and 21,136 pupils enrolled. Tulane University (known as the University of Louisiana from 1834 to 1883) has 59 professors and 683 students. Under its control is the Sophie Newcomb Memorial College (1887), for the higher education of girls. The College of the Immaculate Conception (under the Jesuits) has 228 students. There are 4 colleges for negroes, males and females, with 1860 students. The Howard Memorial (1888), Tulane, and Louisiana state libraries, all free, contain together 120,000 volumes. The Charity Hospital (1784) is the largest institution of its kind in the United States, with accommodation for 800 to 1000 persons; and there are 54 other hospitals, asylums, &c.

The site of New Orleans was first visited in 1699 by Bienville, who in 1718 laid the foundations of the city, and in 1726 made it the capital. In 1763 it was ceded to Spain by France, with the rest of Louisiana; but when in 1765 the Spanish governor, Ulloa, attempted to take possession, he was driven out, and the people established a government of their own. In 1769 New Orleans was occupied by the Spanish, and the leaders in the late movement were shot. It was ceded to France in 1802, and transferred to the United States a few days later. Incorporated as a city in 1804, it was divided in 1836 into three separate municipalities, in consequence of the jealousies be-

tween the Creoles and the Americans; but the three were again consolidated into one in 1852. Since then New Orleans has annexed the neighbouring towns of Lafayette, Jefferson, Carrollton, and Algiers. Other outstanding events in the history of the city have been the battle of New Orleans (see JACKSON) in 1815; its capture in 1862 by the Federal fleet under Admiral Farragut (q.v.); and serious political troubles in 1874 and 1877, resulting in the former year in a battle on the levee between the citizens and the police and militia, in which 46 persons were killed and 216 wounded. In 1880 the capital of Louisiana was removed from New Orleans to Baton Rouge.

Pop. (1769, when it was transferred to Spain) 3190; (1802, when it became American) 10,508; (1840) 102,193; (1880) 216,190; (1890) 241,995. The city is very cosmopolitan in race and language. Only 19 per cent. of the population is of American or English descent, 17 of Creole or French descent, 14 German, 12 Irish, 8 Italian, 5 Spanish, Scandinavian, Jewish, &c., 16 negroes, and 9 of mixed races, Indians, Chinese, and Malays.

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